

Dauphin County

Quality Services Review (QSR) County Improvement Plan (CIP)

Teaming, Engagement, Tracking

NBB Benchmarks Plan

Placement Stability, Re-Entry into Care, Length of Stay

SPONSOR TEAM

The Sponsor Team for this plan is the Dauphin County Senior Management group and QSR Local Site Leads. This group consists of the CYS Administrator, CYS Assistant Administrator, CYS Fiscal Director, CYS Permanency Director, CYS Protective Director, CYS Intake Director, CYS Attorney, CYS Quality Assurance Manager, CYS Office Manager, Administrative Program Specialist and the Internal Quality Assurance Program Specialist.

BACKGROUND

Dauphin developed this plan by conducting numerous discussions in several Senior Management and Needs Based Budget (NBB) planning meetings. It was developed in conjunction with the Quality Services Review (QSR) Local Site Leads, and is intended to serve as both the Agency's QSR County Improvement Plan (CIP), and NBB Benchmarks Plan. There were also detailed discussions about the plan at a Dauphin County Local Children's Roundtable meeting which included representation, participation, and feedback from our DPW Representative, the Dauphin County Dependency Judge, CYS/JPO Hearing Examiner, JPO Management, preventive, in-home, and placement Providers, representatives from our Human Services Directors Office, Mental Health/Intellectual Disability office Management, Guardian Ad Litem, Diakon Paralegal, Harrisburg School District, the CYS Citizens Advisory Board, and the Dauphin County Senior Management Team.

The overall priority areas were selected after evaluating several key sources of information. Dauphin examined its QSR Findings to evaluate not only our strengths, but our opportunities for improvement. In reviewing the NBB Bulletin from the State, Dauphin evaluated the recommended focal points for County's to select from and discussed and evaluated each for inclusion in this plan. In light of evaluating these items, including Dauphin's bi-annual, State provided Hornby Zellar and Associates Data Package, and understanding the States emphasis on improving Re-Entry scores, Dauphin selected Placement Re-Entry, Placement Stability, and Placement Length of Stay as our 3 identified NBB Benchmarks. For our QSR CIP, we selected to focus on the three key areas of Teaming, Engagement, and Tracking. We feel that by instilling a philosophical foundation of Teaming, Engaging, and Tracking in all new programs, practices, and strategies undertaken to improve service, we will increase our likelihood for success. Thus, as outlined in our planning for the NBB Benchmarks, the pillars of Teaming, Engagement, and Tracking will hopefully be clearly evident.

PLAN OVERSIGHT

Dauphin County will review this plan, at a minimum, once a month at a Senior Management meeting. Updates within the plan will be discussed and added to the document at each meeting. Dauphin views this plan as a living, breathing document, always experiencing updates and refinements. The State may request a copy of this plan at any point in time for the most updated version.

CURRENT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE

Placement Stability

<u>Placement Stability</u>											
Dauphin County											
Class 3											
Central Region											
		2007	2008	2008	2009	2009	2010	2010	2011	2011	2012
		30-Sep	31-Mar								
Dauphin County	Placement Stability, 0-12 Months	61.39%	68.02%	78.42%	80.00%	80.61%	79.69%	78.65%	81.61%	78.07%	79.12%
	Placement Stability, 12-24 Months	47.53%	55.97%	52.94%	46.32%	52.43%	62.73%	65.25%	57.01%	61.21%	56.72%
	Placement Stability, 24+ Months	30.54%	29.89%	29.44%	29.12%	22.70%	22.38%	19.71%	16.80%	21.05%	27.66%
Class 3	Placement Stability, 0-12 Months	79.33%	79.54%	81.22%	80.94%	82.86%	83.71%	81.92%	81.35%	80.70%	83.48%
	Placement Stability, 12-24 Months	58.03%	62.09%	60.93%	61.09%	58.76%	60.99%	63.36%	64.10%	59.42%	55.86%
	Placement Stability, 24+ Months	32.59%	32.76%	34.63%	35.51%	35.59%	34.15%	31.91%	31.12%	31.12%	32.64%
Central Region	Placement Stability, 0-12 Months	80.29%	80.69%	81.04%	81.48%	81.88%	84.65%	85.71%	83.78%	84.04%	84.28%
	Placement Stability, 12-24 Months	59.64%	61.20%	61.26%	59.61%	58.37%	59.38%	61.01%	62.97%	61.67%	59.93%
	Placement Stability, 24+ Months	34.40%	34.00%	35.77%	33.76%	30.76%	30.72%	30.29%	30.00%	29.42%	31.50%
Statewide	Placement Stability, 0-12 Months	83.48%	83.16%	82.12%	80.90%	81.49%	82.42%	82.23%	83.05%	83.66%	86.00%
	Placement Stability, 12-24 Months	66.72%	67.80%	66.11%	64.23%	61.99%	62.35%	63.18%	64.36%	63.66%	61.43%
	Placement Stability, 24+ Months	39.98%	40.81%	41.92%	42.14%	41.47%	40.58%	39.08%	38.00%	36.51%	37.47%

The Placement Stability data analyzes the percent of children having 2 or fewer placement settings during the most recent reporting period who were in care for at least 8 days. The measure is broken into 3 sub-categories to include youth who are in placement for less than 12 month, youth in placement for 12-24 months, and youth in placement for 24+ months.

For the youth in placement 0-12 months, Dauphin’s current score is below all of the Class 3, Central Region, and State scores. While this is true, Dauphin has seen an increase in its most recent reporting period. Also, over the 5 years of data presented, Dauphin has seen an overall improvement of 17.73% for this measure.

For the youth in placement 12-24 months, Dauphin’s current score is above the Class 3 scores, but below both the Central Region and State scores. Dauphin has seen a decrease in its most recent score, and currently has its lowest score for this measure since September of 2009. While recently Dauphin is performing below where it has been, over the 5 years of reported data, Dauphin has seen an overall improvement of 9.19% for this measure.

For the youth in placement 24+ months, Dauphin’s current score is below all of the Class 3, Central Region, and State Scores. While this is true, Dauphin has seen 2 consecutive reporting periods with score improvements, for a total of a 10.86% score increase. While Dauphin’s score has declined 2.88% over the 5 year span of data, Dauphin currently has its highest score for this measure since March of 2009.

Placement Re-Entry

CFSR Measure 1.4: Re-Entry											
<i>Of all children reunified during the previous year, what percent re-entered care within 12 months of the discharge to reunification?</i>											
Dauphin County											
Class 3											
Central Region											
		2007	2008	2008	2009	2009	2010	2010	2011	2011	2012
		30-Sep	31-Mar								
County:	Total Reunifications	215	227	200	187	186	182	169	169	177	171
	Re-Entries within 12 months	73	62	46	49	49	51	45	40	47	35
	Percent	33.95%	27.31%	23.00%	26.20%	26.34%	28.02%	26.63%	23.67%	26.55%	20.47%
Class:	Total Reunifications	2,436	2,477	2,331	2,241	2,187	2,182	2,113	1,928	1,657	1,617
	Re-Entries within 12 months	535	519	473	459	429	434	393	367	340	325
	Percent	21.96%	20.95%	20.29%	20.48%	19.62%	19.89%	18.60%	19.04%	20.52%	20.10%
Region:	Total Reunifications	1,679	1,646	1,623	1,535	1,483	1,478	1,379	1,311	1,166	1,114
	Re-Entries within 12 months	406	371	341	340	324	334	281	264	262	244
	Percent	24.18%	22.54%	21.01%	22.15%	21.85%	22.60%	20.38%	20.14%	22.47%	21.90%
Statewide:	Total Reunifications	9,495	9,580	9,539	9,282	9,000	8,673	8,212	7,710	7,068	6,997
	Re-Entries within 12 months	2,672	2,746	2,626	2,567	2,452	2,337	2,120	2,067	1,964	2,029
	Percent	28.14%	28.66%	27.53%	27.66%	27.24%	26.95%	25.82%	26.81%	27.79%	29.00%
	National 75th Percentile	9.9%									

	2007	2008	2008	2009	2009	2010	2010	2011	2011	2012	
	30-Sep	31-Mar	30-Sep	31-Mar	30-Sep	31-Mar	30-Sep	31-Mar	30-Sep	31-Mar	
By Race/Ethnicity (Black)											
	Total Reunifications	153	154	141	130	117	128	128	118	118	103
	Re-Entries within 12 months	59	49	39	35	33	41	39	26	28	19
	Percent	38.56%	31.82%	27.66%	26.92%	28.21%	32.03%	30.47%	22.03%	23.73%	18.45%
By Race/Ethnicity (White)											
	Total Reunifications	67	81	70	63	73	66	53	53	68	78
	Re-Entries within 12 months	16	15	7	14	16	16	12	14	19	16
	Percent	23.88%	18.52%	10.00%	22.22%	21.92%	24.24%	22.64%	26.42%	27.94%	20.51%
By Race/Ethnicity (Hispanic)											
	Total Reunifications	29	37	35	21	26	42	37	29	32	35
	Re-Entries within 12 months	6	7	6	6	9	20	13	9	14	10
	Percent	20.69%	18.92%	17.14%	28.57%	34.62%	47.62%	35.14%	31.03%	43.75%	28.57%
By Race/Ethnicity (Other/Unable to Determine)											
	Total Reunifications	0	0	2	2	0	1	1	2	2	1
	Re-Entries within 12 months	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
	Percent	-	-	0.00%	0.00%	-	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

	2007	2008	2008	2009	2009	2010	2010	2011	2011	2012	
	30-Sep	31-Mar	30-Sep	31-Mar	30-Sep	31-Mar	30-Sep	31-Mar	30-Sep	31-Mar	
By Gender (Male)											
	Total Reunifications	114	127	116	114	115	103	90	102	104	102
	Re-Entries within 12 months	48	41	31	30	34	27	20	24	29	23
	Percent	42.11%	32.28%	26.72%	26.32%	29.57%	26.21%	22.22%	23.53%	27.88%	22.55%
By Gender (Female)											
	Total Reunifications	101	100	84	73	71	79	79	67	73	69
	Re-Entries within 12 months	25	21	15	19	15	24	25	16	18	12
	Percent	24.75%	21.00%	17.86%	26.03%	21.13%	30.38%	31.65%	23.88%	24.66%	17.39%
Total											
	Total Reunifications	215	227	200	187	186	182	169	169	177	171
	Re-Entries within 12 months	73	62	46	49	49	51	45	40	47	35
	Percent	33.95%	27.31%	23.00%	26.20%	26.34%	28.02%	26.63%	23.67%	26.55%	20.47%

	2007	2008	2008	2009	2009	2010	2010	2011	2011	2012
	30-Sep	31-Mar								
By Age (0 to 1)										
Total Reunifications	28	31	16	15	15	20	16	17	22	21
Re-Entries within 12 months	11	9	2	4	6	5	5	5	7	5
Percent	39.29%	29.03%	12.50%	26.67%	40.00%	25.00%	31.25%	29.41%	31.82%	23.81%
By Age (2 to 5)										
Total Reunifications	34	39	24	24	30	32	29	30	33	36
Re-Entries within 12 months	6	5	2	3	6	13	11	7	7	4
Percent	17.65%	12.82%	8.33%	12.50%	20.00%	40.63%	37.93%	23.33%	21.21%	11.11%
By Age (6 to 9)										
Total Reunifications	17	26	22	13	19	18	18	16	19	17
Re-Entries within 12 months	7	6	3	3	4	6	4	1	2	3
Percent	41.18%	23.08%	13.64%	23.08%	21.05%	33.33%	22.22%	6.25%	10.53%	17.65%
By Age (10 to 12)										
Total Reunifications	13	16	17	15	11	11	18	16	9	7
Re-Entries within 12 months	7	6	2	2	2	3	6	6	4	2
Percent	53.85%	37.50%	11.76%	13.33%	18.18%	27.27%	33.33%	37.50%	44.44%	28.57%
By Age (13 to 15)										
Total Reunifications	48	49	62	51	43	46	38	28	34	35
Re-Entries within 12 months	20	19	24	16	14	18	16	11	15	13
Percent	41.67%	38.78%	38.71%	31.37%	32.56%	39.13%	42.11%	39.29%	44.12%	37.14%
By Age (16 to 17)										
Total Reunifications	60	50	50	61	57	46	44	51	50	49
Re-Entries within 12 months	20	16	13	21	17	6	3	10	12	8
Percent	33.33%	32.00%	26.00%	34.43%	29.82%	13.04%	6.82%	19.61%	24.00%	16.33%
By Age (18 to 20)										
Total Reunifications	15	16	9	8	11	9	6	11	10	6
Re-Entries within 12 months	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Percent	13.33%	6.25%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Unknown Age										
Total Reunifications	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Re-Entries within 12 months	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Percent	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total										
Total Reunifications	215	227	200	187	186	182	169	169	177	171
Re-Entries within 12 months	73	62	46	49	49	51	45	40	47	35
Percent	33.95%	27.31%	23.00%	26.20%	26.34%	28.02%	26.63%	23.67%	26.55%	20.47%

The Placement Re-Entry data analyzes, for children reunified during the previous year, the percent of youth reentering care within 12 months of a discharge to reunification. Dauphin's current score is better than the Central Region and State scores, but below the Class 3 score by about a third of a percentage point. Dauphin currently has its best score in the 5 years of provided data, and has seen an improvement of 13.48% over the last 5 years, moving from a rate reentry rate of 33.95% to 20.47%. Despite this positive move in Dauphin's score over the last 5 years, specifically score improvements in 3 of the last 4 reporting periods, we are still some distance off of the targeted Federal 75th Percentile score of 9.9%.

For Dauphin's re-entry scores, there currently appears to be little disparity in re-entry rates for scores of African American and Caucasian youth. Caucasian youth are reentering care at a rate of 20.51%, while African American youth are reentering at a rate of 18.45%. Hispanic youth however are reentering at a noticeably more significant rate, currently reentering care at 28.57%. Male youth (22.55%) are reentering care at a slightly higher rate than females (17.39%).

Dauphin's scores show interesting results for re-entry rates by age. Per the last reporting period, youth age 0-1 are reentering care at a rate of nearly 24%. When looking at the next age grouping of youth age 2-5, there is a significant drop off in the re-entry rate, currently showing a score of 11%. Re-entry rates trend higher for the next several age groups with re-entry scores of 18% for youth age 6-9, 29% for youth age 10-12, and 37% for youth age 13-15. Re-entry rates then drop off by more than half for the 16-17 group, with a re-entry percentage of roughly 16%.

Placement Length of Stay

		2007		2008		2008		2009		2009		2010		2010		2011		2011		2012	
		30-Sep	31-Mar																		
County:	Reunified During Year	8.7	132	8.1	122	8.1	141	8.6	133	9.0	123	7.1	135	6.9	134	7.3	129	6.9	160	7.4	169
Class:	Reunified During Year	7.1	1,826	6.9	1,760	7.1	1,731	6.8	1,717	7.9	1,730	7.9	1,570	6.7	1,330	6.2	1,269	6.3	1,222	6.7	1,194
Region:	Reunified During Year	6.2	1,224	5.9	1,147	6.1	1,129	6.4	1,101	6.9	1,079	6.7	1,044	5.2	874	5.2	832	5.9	831	5.9	869
Statewide:	Reunified During Year	6.8	7,080	6.6	6,867	6.9	6,659	6.9	6,371	7.6	6,254	7.7	5,751	7.4	5,124	6.7	4,979	6.3	4,633	6.3	4,492
	National 75 th Percentile	5.4	-	5.4	-	5.4	-	5.4	-	5.4	-	5.4	-	5.4	-	5.4	-	5.4	-	5.4	-

		2007		2008		2008		2009		2009		2010		2010		2011		2011		2012	
		30-Sep	31-Mar																		
		8.8	100	8.1	90	9.6	89	9.2	93	8.5	97	7.1	98	7.0	94	7.1	79	6.9	103	8.0	111
	<i>By Race/Ethnicity (Black)</i>	8.7	38	8.8	38	6.2	56	6.3	47	9.7	32	6.9	40	5.8	50	7.3	61	7.1	64	7.2	63
	<i>By Race/Ethnicity (White)</i>	6.7	26	11.8	12	6.3	17	7.5	22	8.0	24	7.6	25	7.3	19	8.0	22	5.7	18	5.6	17
	<i>By Race/Ethnicity (Hispanic)</i>	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	0.4	1	-	0
	<i>By Race/Ethnicity (Other)</i>	8.7	132	8.1	122	8.1	141	8.6	133	9.0	123	7.1	135	6.9	134	7.3	129	6.9	160	7.4	169
	Total																				

		2007		2008		2008		2009		2009		2010		2010		2011		2011		2012	
		30-Sep	31-Mar																		
		9.5	74	9.6	71	7.6	89	9.2	82	9.4	74	7.5	84	6.4	78	6.6	78	6.9	92	7.2	93
	<i>By Gender (Male)</i>	6.2	58	5.8	51	9.7	52	8.0	51	7.5	49	5.2	51	7.1	56	8.2	51	6.7	68	7.7	76
	<i>By Gender (Female)</i>	8.7	132	8.1	122	8.1	141	8.6	133	9.0	123	7.1	135	6.9	134	7.3	129	6.9	160	7.4	169
	Total																				

		2007		2008		2008		2009		2009		2010		2010		2011		2011		2012	
		30-Sep	31-Mar																		
		5.0	9	3.9	8	4.4	6	5.3	13	8.7	10	5.1	11	5.1	13	7.1	16	5.6	17	5.3	13
	<i>By Age (0 to 1)</i>	7.9	16	9.1	14	7.5	21	5.0	18	10.1	17	7.1	21	7.1	24	9.3	30	10.3	17	9.0	15
	<i>By Age (2 to 5)</i>	5.8	11	5.9	8	5.5	15	5.4	10	9.7	11	9.5	14	12.9	15	9.3	12	5.5	9	8.0	17
	<i>By Age (6 to 9)</i>	6.0	10	5.8	9	9.3	10	15.4	8	9.5	12	6.4	12	5.1	7	3.8	6	9.2	12	8.0	13
	<i>By Age (10 to 12)</i>	8.1	42	6.9	34	7.2	33	8.7	34	8.7	26	5.4	25	6.5	25	6.8	20	3.2	34	4.1	30
	<i>By Age (13 to 15)</i>	12.1	34	11.3	41	9.6	45	9.3	41	8.5	41	7.4	41	6.6	40	7.2	39	7.9	54	7.6	58
	<i>By Age (16 to 17)</i>	13.1	10	15.8	8	17.3	11	10.0	9	3.9	6	8.4	11	19.3	10	7.4	6	10.3	17	9.5	23
	<i>By Age (18 to 20)</i>	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
	<i>By Age (Unknown)</i>	8.7	132	8.1	122	8.1	141	8.6	133	9.0	123	7.1	135	6.9	134	7.3	129	6.9	160	7.4	169
	Total																				

The Placement Length of Stay data analyzes the median length of stay for all youth reunified during the year. Dauphin's current score for this measure is a median length of stay of 7.4 months. Dauphin's score is slightly higher (worse) than the Class 3 (6.7 months), Central Region (5.9 months), and State (6.3 months) scores for the most recent reporting period.

Dauphin's scores show minimal disparity between Caucasian and African American youth. Per the last reporting period, Caucasian youth experienced a median length of stay of 7.2 months, whereas African American youth experienced a median of 8.0 months. Hispanic youth saw the lowest median length of stay with 5.6 month placement episodes. There was also little to no difference in median length of stay by gender, with males having a median of 7.2 and females 7.7.

Evaluating the data by age, Dauphin's score for median length of stay for youth age 0-1 reunified during the year was 5.3 months, Dauphin's second best age group score. For youth ages 2-5, the median length of stay jumps to 9.0 months, which is the second worst score for an age group behind the 18-20 year old youth (9.5 months). Both the 6-9 and 10-12 age groups have an 8.0 month median length of stay. This is followed by Dauphin's highest ranking age group, youth ages 13-15 having a median length of stay of only 4.1 months. Youth ages 16-17 have a median length of stay of 7.6 months.

LINK TO COUNTY PRACTICES

Dauphin recognizes that many County practices contribute to the current level of functioning within the Agency. Per the Needs Based Budget Bulletin, below is how Dauphin feels Family Engagement Efforts, Use of the Safety Assessment and Management Process in Decision Making, Process for Placement Decisions regarding Placement Settings, using Quality Assessments, Individualizing Services, Continuous Care Status Reviews, Case Planning for Successful Transition/Closure, Teaming, and SCR impact our functioning.

Dauphin County places significant efforts in Family Engagement. We fully recognize that Family Engagement can have a significant impact on placement stability and re-entry. Therefore, our first approach is to always look for people within the family or kin to be the placement resource from the beginning. We try diligently to ensure that every family that we come in contact with is fully engaged and has every opportunity to be heard throughout their experience with the County. We utilize practices such as Family Group Conferencing, Family Finding, Pre-Court Meetings, and Blended Perspective Meetings on a broad scale and at every level of involvement with the family. These are preventative measures, as well as practices that are utilized to encourage stability and reunification for youth in placement.

We are also fully invested in utilizing our SWAN services such as Child Specific Recruitment, Child Preparation and Child Profiles that also assist us with placement stability. More recently, we have begun to look at other ways to ensure that a child will experience as few moves as possible once entering care. Facilitated matching, where the biological parents and the foster parents interview each other and are encouraged to work together is one new technique we have become engaged in with stakeholders. In addition, Specialized Recruitment efforts and Special Services Unit triages, which bring together everyone that should be involved in a placement decision, are also being explored. All these engagement efforts will ultimately impact the length of time that a child has to stay in formal placement.

Keeping children safe is at the core of what we do in child welfare. Our Safety Assessment tools are the catalyst for initial placement decisions, and often for changes in placement as well. We are required to know the safety risks and threats to any child that we are providing services for under our jurisdiction. There are instances where a child must be removed due to the wishes of the biological or foster family where there is not a safety issue. However, completing the assessment on a regular basis can give you information that you need to see if a placement is breaking down, or if a family is in need of additional supports. Knowing this information readily can give the Agency the opportunity to make every effort to maintain the placement, and reduce the need for possible placement moves impacting a youth's placement stability.

When a child leaves care their safety is assessed. Their housing situation, education, health, and general well-being are all considered and evaluated. This is important because we believe that the more stable the situation that the child is returning to, the less likely it is that they will re-enter care. If a child does re-enter the system, their safety will be assessed again and on an ongoing basis.

The decision to place a child is rarely an easy one. Within the Agency the Caseworker and their Supervisor are the first to realize that a placement may become necessary. Once they have made that determination, a triage meeting within the Agency would ensue. This is a meeting that anyone can participate in, and an all-staff e-mail is sent requesting anyone who is available to join for the meeting to contribute and offer ideas and suggestions for not only how to prevent the placement, but if placement is deemed necessary, what types of things should be

considered when choosing the most appropriate placement setting to reduce the chances of future placement moves and to plan for the shortest length of placement. The triage meetings' purpose is to ensure that the decision to place is not made in isolation, but many different perspectives and suggestions have been considered. Within the triage setting the topic of placement stability, length of stay and re-entry are a constant. Plans are regularly made to try and avoid the placement, but when this cannot be achieved plans for stability, and timely permanence are paramount. Every need is planned for to reduce the possibility for re-entry. With regards to placement settings, the Agency does have a unit that specializes in helping workers make the best decisions regarding placement settings. Agency Senior Management is readily involved in this process as well.

While the Agency does rely heavily on state mandated forms with regards to assessments, we rely even more on the training and expertise of our workers. We instill the philosophies of strength-based practice with our workers from the beginning and we ensure that they are properly trained and monitored. We also recognize the importance of collecting data that reflects the work that we are doing to assist with informed, educated decision making as well as having structured accountability. In addition to the accountability that is built in by the natural chain of command, we also have a Quality Assurance unit that reviews cases and protocols regularly to ensure that we are in compliance. We also participated in the Quality Services Review (QSR) in the spring of 2012 which is a part of the State's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) efforts, demonstrating our commitment to perpetual improvement as an Agency. We are constantly examining our assessments and our practice and the impact that it has on the Children and Families that we serve. Dauphin will be working towards implementation of the CANS Assessment in fiscal year 12/13 to strengthen our assessment phase with families.

Every family has their own individualized plan which is reviewed at least once every six months. As previously mentioned, the Agency does utilize the practice of Family Group Conferencing as a mechanism for learning what the family's needs are and having them create their own unique plan, individualized to their own family. Once these needs are identified, the Agency utilizes both contracted and community resources to assist the family. Services are tracked, monitored and altered depending on the needs of the family. The goal is always to meet the needs of the family as quickly as possible and with the least disruption, while leading them to self-sufficiency on their personal and community resources. However, often issues such as placement approval, fiscal and legal limitations and service capacity can compromise placement stability. Although these are all circumstances that are out of our control, we do try to mitigate the impact of these realities by being pro-active and creative.

The Agency keeps extensive records regarding previous family involvement with our Agency. This information includes what services were provided and how successful or unsuccessful they might have been. A new plan is always developed for the child and family with each new contact with the Agency which will assist them in meeting their most current goals based on their most current needs.

When any significant change occurs within the family, placement stability, length of stay and re-entry may all be affected. Concurrent planning is an effective way to ensure that all possibilities are truly being considered and planned for accordingly. The Agency will be utilizing the concurrent planning self-assessment (as required in the 2012 Needs Based Budget Bulletin) to evaluate our current level of performance and to plan for ways to improve upon our concurrent planning practices. Agency Caseworkers do meet regularly with families to review the family's plan to continually work on the steps for successful conclusion of Agency services.

The Agency also participates in the Permanency Practice Initiative (PPI) through the Administrative Offices of the Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC). Three month court reviews is a significant aspect of the initiative and can significantly impact placement stability, re-entry and length of stay in care by having the court review family plans nearly twice as frequently. Engaging the courts can assist in overcoming everyday challenges with regards to these goals. Family Group Conferencing and Family Finding, also part of the PPI, can have a significant impact on these goals as well. Lastly, Agency triages are encouraged for the purpose of making decisions around case transitions and/or case closure.

The Agency has always been a strong proponent of teaming. More recently, we have more strategically incorporated teaming as one of the main focal points of how we do business, primarily via FGC, Blended Perspective Meetings, Team Meetings, and triages. Philosophically, we truly believe that more heads are better than one, especially when making critical, life changing decisions about the children and families that we serve. We are invested in teaming in both formal and informal ways, and within the Agency as well as outside. The Agency has group supervisions where an entire service division meets together to discuss cases, strategize and discuss division issues. The Lead Case Management Protocol ensures that we are teaming with the other County categorical agencies in a timely and effective manner. These interactions with other agencies that are providing services to the same population can greatly impact placement stability and re-entry. For example, if a mother is involved with mental health services and is experiencing a severe mental break, our ability to team with that system could have a huge impact on the safety of the children in her care. Our teaming efforts with CBHNP regarding approvals in service can have an impact of the length of time that a child is in placement. Teaming requires that you communicate effectively and thoroughly so that the best decisions can be made and we have worked hard at improving our teaming.

Shared Case Responsibility can have a significant impact on stability, re-entry and length of stay. The purpose of Shared Case Responsibility is to ensure that the same population of children are receiving all the services that they are entitled to, and that the Juvenile Probation Office and Children and Youth services are teaming and engaging with each other to ensure that this happens.

Through contact with the Juvenile Probation office, a child that is delinquent and has already been to placement, but that may also be dependent can be identified more readily and appropriate services identified more quickly. When this information is learned early enough through SCR, informal methods to assist the family can be utilized and another formal placement can be avoided. Additionally, once a child is determined to be both delinquent and dependent, the length of time that they may have to be placed could significantly increase.

Benchmark: PLACEMENT STABILITY

Strategy 1: Facilitated Matching

- Dauphin County has recently begun to explore the process of facilitated matching when a child must enter placement. This is an innovative but commonsense approach to help ensure that the placement will be appropriate, successful and stable. Essentially, there must be discussion/interview and subsequent agreement from the entire cross-system team about the placement.

<u>Action Steps</u>	<u>Indicator/ Benchmark</u>	<u>Evidence of Completion</u>	<u>Person Responsible</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Resources Needed</u>	<u>Status Update / Notes (Date)</u>
Hold regular implementation meetings with Special Services staff and other relevant parties	Designated # of meetings within a specified period of time	Implementation plan and documentation of meetings held, updates provided to Sponsor Team	The Sponsor Team, Special services Manager, Joy Mokwa (lead CW), Liz	Begin Summer 2012 and ongoing	Calendar of meetings, deadlines for implementation and regular feedback	-Meetings have already occurred and will be formalized into the implementation team -
Survey or hold meetings with Bio Fam, Foster families, and CW's to get their input regarding effectiveness of this practice	Target number of meetings or surveys to collect within a specific period of time	Survey Results presented to Sponsor Team for review and next step identification	The Sponsor Team, Special services Manager, Joy Mokwa	December 2012	Survey, Staff time to conduct surveys/meetings	-
Develop a way to collect feedback, monitor and track progress on an on-going basis	Progress made working with IT to develop a way to track these youth's plx moves	Documentation of progress, updates provided to Sponsor Team	The Sponsor Team, Special services Manager, Joy Mokwa	December 2012	Spreadsheet/tracking system created	-

Strategy 2: Targeted Recruitment and Training

- This is a strategy that the Agency is beginning to utilize to ensure that we are improving our foster parent recruitment and training strategies so that we can recruit foster parents that can relate, understand and meet the needs of the unique population we serve.

<u>Action Steps</u>	<u>Indicator/ Benchmark</u>	<u>Evidence of Completion</u>	<u>Person Responsible</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Resources Needed</u>	<u>Status Update / Notes (Date)</u>
Create a Specialized Recruitment Committee to take lead on Strategy	Formation of group and ongoing implementation meetings	1 st meeting held, documentation of meeting notes	Special Services Manager	August 2012		-First meeting held 8/7/12. Participants included foster parents, CYS staff, Sr. Mgt - Meeting newsletter created and sent to all staff after first meeting
Reach out to other Agency staff, provider agencies, foster parents, or other stakeholders who may have ideas/expertise on how to improve our efforts	Representative participation in the committee meetings	Documentation of meeting notes Reports back to Sponsor Team	The Sponsor Team, Special Services Manager, Spec Recruit Committee	Ongoing after group implementation	Meeting time/location, refreshments to increase external stakeholder attendance	-
Looking at where recruitment efforts should be targeted and strategies for improvement (what geographical areas, for any specialized populations of youth?)	Tracking how many new foster homes we have within an identified area or able to handle an identified population of youth	Reports back to Sponsor Group	The Sponsor Team, Special Services Manager	Ongoing	Geo-mapping capabilities/ IT data, Suggestions regarding where (specifically) staff should recruit	-

Strategy 3: Placement Stabilization/Preservation Triages

- Currently, the Agency holds triages whenever anyone wants or needs direction regarding helping a family to meet their needs or to assist them with avoiding further entry into our system. Placement Stabilization/Preservation Triages will function much in the same way, however instead of the process being closed to non-Agency personnel, Provider staff, family members and anyone who has a vested interest in what is going on within the family (anyone on the family’s cross-system team) will be invited with a specific focus on maintaining a youth in their placement to prevent a placement move.

<u>Action Steps</u>	<u>Indicator/ Benchmark</u>	<u>Evidence of Completion</u>	<u>Person Responsible</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Resources Needed</u>	<u>Status Update / Notes (Date)</u>
Discuss/ define guidelines and expectations for the process	Guidelines/ policy have been developed	Documentation to Sponsor Team, Notification to all staff	The Sponsor Team, Special Services Manager	September 2012		-The Special Services unit has been informed of the need for their involvement with this strategy and understand they must begin to plan accordingly
Begin holding Special Services Triage meetings	The number of Special Services triages that are being held.	Documentation of the number of meetings that have been held, Reports back to Sponsor Team	The Sponsor Team, Special Services Manager	June 2012	A room for the meeting, a person/ process to ensure that all appropriate persons have been invited and that all feedback is being captured	-
Develop a way to track the success of the triages. Create Spreadsheet or other tracking mechanism with IT	Development of a method of feedback, as well as a way to monitor the progress of specified goals	Documentation of how these meetings are tracked, Reports back to Sponsor Team	The Sponsor Team, Special Services Manager, IT	September 2012	IT input, knowledge of excel, personnel identified that is responsible for tracking this information	-

Benchmark: PLACEMENT RE-ENTRY

Strategy 1: Internal Re-Entry Study

- This study is a new idea designed to get a more in depth and detailed understanding of Dauphin's placement re-entry population demographics.

<u>Action Steps</u>	<u>Indicator/ Benchmark</u>	<u>Evidence of Completion</u>	<u>Person Responsible</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Resources Needed</u>	<u>Status Update / Notes (Date)</u>
Define what we want to know and how it will be measured (ex. SCR, why re-enter, level of care reentered to, planned, services provided prior to reentry, etc...)	Solid identification of what factors we want to examine	Agreed upon factors from Sponsor Group	The Sponsor team, QA Manager, potentially IT support	November 2012 (see note column)	Methodology for collecting the data and staff that can then collect the data accurately. Data analysis	-The study will be led by the QA Manager. It will begin upon his return from paternity leave in early November.
Creation of electronic files for study	Excel spreadsheets created	Files created, available for Sponsor Team review	The Sponsor Team, QA Manager	December 2012		-
Pulling the data	Data available and pulled from HZA,	Successful compilation of spreadsheet information to be eligible to run statistical reports	The Sponsor team, QA Manager, possibly IT support	December 2012	HZA case specific data tables	-
Compile Report for Sponsor Team	Report written	Report presented to Sponsor Team	The Sponsor team, QA Manager, possibly IT support	January 2013		-

Strategy 2: Creation of Internal Re-Entry Improvement Planning Group

- Based on the findings of the aforementioned group, we plan on initiating a time-limited group to evaluate the findings and recommend plans for how to improve in this area. Recommendations of this group will be used during the 2013 NBB planning cycle for identified resources.

<u>Action Steps</u>	<u>Indicator/ Benchmark</u>	<u>Evidence of Completion</u>	<u>Person Responsible</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Resources Needed</u>	<u>Status Update / Notes (Date)</u>
Determine who is interested or has the expertise needed to participate on the team	The creation of a team within a specified period of time	Documentation of team members, Distribution list, Final review and edits from the Sponsor team	Sponsor Team, QA Manager	January 2013		-This group will immediately follow the internal study identified in Re-Entry Strategy 1
Set scheduled of meetings and agenda	Ongoing meetings held	Documentation of the meeting notes, updates given to Sponsor team	Sponsor Team, QA Manager	February 2013		-
Production of recommendations to Sponsor Team for consideration in 2013 NBB Planning Cycle	Consistent meeting attendance and progress toward goal completion	Presented list of recommend's to Sponsor Team	Sponsor Team, QA Manager, committee	May 2013	TBD by group	-
Utilization of recommendations in 2013 NBB planning meetings	Utilization of recommend's during planning meetings	Discussion held to evaluate appropriateness of recommend's and if going to pursue	Sponsor Team	June 2013		-

Benchmark: PLACEMENT LENGTH OF STAY

Strategy 1: Concurrent Planning Self-Assessment

- This County self-assessment is required per the 2012 Needs Based Budget Bulletin.

<u>Action Steps</u>	<u>Indicator/ Benchmark</u>	<u>Evidence of Completion</u>	<u>Person Responsible</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Resources Needed</u>	<u>Status Update / Notes (Date)</u>
Identify a point person to navigate and facilitate the completion of the Self-Assessment	Discussion about who would be best in this role.	Identification of a lead person	Sponsor Team	October 2012	A person who has the capacity to understand what is needed and has the time to complete it.	-NBB Bulletin ID's an online resource to support County completion
Completion of the Self-Assessment	Determine if group needs to be formed or if one person can complete assessment	Completion of required Self-Assessment template	Sponsor Team and ID-ed point person/group	February 2013		-
Presentation of assessment with recommendations to Sponsor Team	Formalization of assessment into final draft	Presentation of Self-Assessment to Sponsor Team	Sponsor Team and ID-ed point person/group	March 2013		-
Sponsor Team consideration of Self-Assessment and Rec's of needed resources for consideration in 2013 NBB Planning Cycle	Utilization of recommend's during planning meetings	Discussion held to evaluate appropriateness of recommend's and if going to pursue	Sponsor Team	June 2013	TA regarding any expectations for the assessment.	-

Strategy 2: Effectiveness of 3 Month Reviews Internal Study

- This internally conducted research study is planned to evaluate the effectiveness of Dauphin’s 3 month status review hearings as part of the AOPC PPI Initiative.

<u>Action Steps</u>	<u>Indicator/ Benchmark</u>	<u>Evidence of Completion</u>	<u>Person Responsible</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Resources Needed</u>	<u>Status Update / Notes (Date)</u>
Identify all youth who have had a 3 month review for the desired period of time to be covered by the study and enter into a master spreadsheet	ID what demographic factors to track in master spreadsheet	Selection of data set, coordination with IT/Legal to compile list of names	Sponsor Team, QA Manager, IT/Legal support	November 2012		- The study will be led by the QA Manager. It will begin upon his return from paternity leave in early November. -
Identify a control group of youth to compare to 3 month reviewed youth	Collaborate with IT/Legal	Produced list of control group youth for comparison	Sponsor Team, QA Manager, IT/Legal support	December 2012		-Use HZ data package Length of Stay numbers?
Prepare a report showing the difference in Length of Stay for youth receiving 3 month reviews and control group. Report findings in different sub-groups to include age.	Progress compiling report	Completed report presented to Sponsor Team	Sponsor Team, QA Manager	January 2013		-
If results were meaningful, explore similar internal study for other PPI Initiative elements	Determine which elements to evaluate (FF?, FGC?,etc...)	Discussion with Sponsor Team	Sponsor Team, QA Manager	February 2013		-

Strategy 3: Length of Stay Link to Intensive Family Service Internal Study

- This internally conducted study is intended to evaluate the correlation between a youth’s length of stay and whether they received an intensive in-home service (example reunification services) while in placement.

<u>Action Steps</u>	<u>Indicator/ Benchmark</u>	<u>Evidence of Completion</u>	<u>Person Responsible</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Resources Needed</u>	<u>Status Update / Notes (Date)</u>
ID the timeframe and services to be evaluated for the study	Review of services and available data sources	Final selection made	Sponsor Team, QA Manager	November 2012		- The study will be led by the QA Manager. It will begin upon his return from paternity leave in early November.
ID all youth who have received reunification services during selected time period	Analysis of QA referral tracking spreadsheets	Final compilation of list	Sponsor Team, QA Manager	December 2012		-
Create master spreadsheet of all youth. Determine what additional demographics to evaluate (type of care, age, etc...)	Discussions with Sponsor Teams for input	Spreadsheet designed and created	Sponsor Team, QA Manager	December 2012		-
Identify a control group of youth to compare to youth receiving reunification services	Collaboration with IT	Produced list of control group youth for comparison	Sponsor Team, QA Manager, IT	December 2012		-Use HZ data package Length of Stay numbers?
Prepare a report to Sponsor Team comparing Length of Stay for youth receiving service versus those not	Progress compiling report	Completed report presented to Sponsor Team	Sponsor Team, QA Manager	January 2012		